

General Assembly

Amendment

February Session, 2008

LCO No. 5814

HB0564105814HD0

Offered by:

REP. FELTMAN, 6th Dist. REP. ROY, 119th Dist. REP. AMAN, 14th Dist. SEN. FASANO, 34th Dist. SEN. COLEMAN, 2nd Dist. REP. MINER, 66th Dist. REP. CHAPIN, 67th Dist. REP. BACCHIOCHI, 52nd Dist.

To: Subst. House Bill No. **5641**

File No. 342

Cal. No. 208

"AN ACT CONCERNING CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT."

- Strike everything after the enacting clause and substitute the
- 2 following in lieu thereof:
- 3 "Section 1. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2008) As used in sections 2 to 8,
- 4 inclusive, of this act, section 16a-32 of the general statutes, as amended
- 5 by this act, and section 8-25 of the general statutes, as amended by this
- 6 act:
- 7 (1) "Conservation development" means a residential development
- 8 that concentrates buildings and structures in specific areas of a lot, site
- 9 or parcel so that the remaining land can be used for open space or
- 10 preservation of features or structures with environmental, historical,
- 11 cultural or other significance;
- 12 (2) "Conservation development zone" means an overlay zone

13 adopted by a zoning commission pursuant to sections 2 to 4, inclusive, 14 of this act:

- 15 (3) "Open space" means land or a permanent interest in land that is 16 used for or satisfies one or more of the criteria listed in subsection (b) 17 of section 7-131d of the general statutes;
- 18 (4) "Zoning commission" means a municipal agency designated or 19 authorized to exercise zoning powers under chapter 124 of the general 20 statutes or any special act; and
 - (5) "Planning commission" means a municipal agency designated or authorized to exercise subdivision powers under chapter 126 of the general statutes or any special act.
- 24 Sec. 2. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2008) (a) Notwithstanding the 25 provisions of any charter or special act, a zoning commission may 26 adopt, as part of the zoning regulations adopted under section 8-2 of 27 the general statutes or any special act, regulations establishing 28 conservation development zones and requirements for conservation 29 development site plans in accordance with the provisions of this section and sections 3 and 4 of this act. 30
- (b) A conservation development zone shall be an overlay zone and 32 regulations for such zone shall provide for the following:
- 33 (1) A conservation development shall be located in a conservation 34 development zone and be a permitted use in such zone and shall not 35 be subject to any special permit, special exception, special exemption 36 or other similar discretionary procedures, requirements or standards 37 under the provisions of chapter 124 of the general statutes;
 - (2) The number of housing units per acre in the conservation development zone shall constitute an increase over the housing density of the underlying zone of (A) at least fifteen per cent if the amount of land set aside is more than twenty-five per cent of the development area; (B) at least twenty per cent if the amount of land set

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aside as open space is more than thirty per cent; or (C) at least thirty per cent if the amount of land set aside as open space is more than forty per cent. For the purpose of calculating density under this section, open space shall consist of that portion of land in the proposal that is suitable for development. As used in this section "suitable for development" shall be construed to include all land except land described in subdivision (5) of this subsection. The density provided for in this subdivision shall be increased by two per cent if the open space to be set aside is adjacent to other open space or to a public highway;

- (3) Notwithstanding any minimum lot or building requirements in the municipality, the size of lots shall be based on soil characteristics, except as otherwise provided for in this subdivision. If a lot is served by a public water or sewer system or other sewage treatment system, the regulations may authorize the zoning commission to waive the requirements of the zoning regulations, including, but not limited to, requirements for lot size setbacks, lot coverage, building height and road frontage. If a lot is not served by a public water or sewer system or other sewage treatment system, such regulations shall contain provisions for lot size, setbacks, lot coverage, building height and road frontage that are necessary to protect the health and safety of the municipality;
- (4) Open space in a conservation development shall restore, preserve or enhance wildlife habitation or use of the property. A condition of approval shall include a written commitment by a municipality or a nonprofit conservation organization for the management of the open space. Such commitment shall be recorded on the land records of each municipality in which the property is located; and
- (5) The amount of open space the zoning commission may require in a conservation development shall be at least twenty-five per cent, but not more than fifty per cent, of the land that can be improved excluding: (A) Land already committed to a public use or purpose,

whether publicly or privately owned; (B) existing parks, recreation areas and open space that is dedicated to the public or subject to a recorded conservation easement; (C) land otherwise subject to an enforceable restriction on or prohibition of development; (D) wetlands or watercourses, as defined in chapter 440 of the general statutes; and (E) land with steep slopes in excess of forty degrees.

- Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2008*) (a) A zoning commission, at the time of and as part of its adoption of regulations for a conservation development zone, may adopt design standards for a conservation development within such zone.
 - (b) Such design standards may (1) ensure that construction within the conservation development zone is complementary to adjacent and neighboring buildings and structures; and (2) address the scale and proportions of buildings, site coverage, alignment, width and grade of streets and sidewalks, type and location of infrastructure, location of building and garage entrances, off-street parking, protection of significant natural site features, location and design of open spaces, signage, and setbacks and buffering from adjacent properties.
 - Sec. 4. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2008) (a) A zoning commission shall prescribe, consistent with the provisions of this section and sections 2 and 3 of this act, the form of an application for approval of a conservation development or conservation development site plan. Receipt and processing of applications shall follow the time periods and procedures of chapter 124 of the general statutes. A zoning commission, or its agent, may, to the extent allowed by the Freedom of Information Act, conduct one or more preliminary or preapplication planning or workshop meetings with regard to a conservation development zone or development.
 - (b) The regulations for a conservation development may require the applicant for approval of a conservation development to pay the cost of reasonable consulting fees to provide peer review of the technical aspects of the application for the benefit of the commission. Such fees

shall be held in a separate account and used only for expenses associated with the technical review of the application by consultants who are not otherwise salaried employees of the municipality or the commission, and any surplus remaining, including any interest accrued, shall be returned to the applicant within forty-five days of the completion of such technical review.

- (c) Conservation development regulations may provide for the referral of a site plan for comment to other agencies, boards or commissions of the municipality. If a site plan is referred to another agency, board or commission, such agency, board or commission may provide any comments to the zoning commission within the applicable time period for such commission to make a decision on the application.
- (d) A conservation development shall be approved by the zoning commission subject only to conditions that are necessary to (1) ensure substantial compliance of the proposed development with the requirements of the conservation development zone regulations, design standards, if any, and, as applicable, site plan regulations, pursuant to sections 1 to 4, inclusive, of this act and chapter 124 of the general statutes; or (2) ensure compliance with the provisions of any state law or regulations adopted thereunder or local ordinance concerning land use. An application may be denied only on the grounds that: (A) The development does not meet the requirements set forth in the conservation development zone regulations or the conservation development site plan regulations, as applicable; (B) the applicant failed to submit information and fees required by the regulations and necessary for an adequate and timely review of the development; or (C) there is no grantee for an easement or conveyance of the open space.
- (e) The duration and renewal of an approval of a conservation development shall be governed by subsection (i) or (j) of section 8-3 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes.
- 139 Sec. 5. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2008) (a) Notwithstanding the

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provisions of any charter or special act, a planning commission may adopt, as part of the subdivision regulations adopted under section 8-25 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, or any special act, regulations for conservation development subdivisions, in accordance with the provisions of sections 5 to 7, inclusive, of this act and section 8-25 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes, as amended by this

- (b) Conservation development subdivision regulations shall provide
 for the following:
 - (1) A conservation development subdivision shall not be subject to any special permit, special exception or special exemption or other similar discretionary procedures, requirements or standards under the provisions of chapter 124 or 126 of the general statutes;
 - (2) The number of housing units per acre in the conservation development subdivision shall constitute an increase over the housing density of the underlying zone of (A) at least fifteen per cent if the amount of land set aside is more than twenty-five per cent of the development area; (B) at least twenty per cent if the amount of land set aside as open space is more than thirty per cent; or (C) at least thirty per cent if the amount of land set aside as open space is more than forty per cent. For the purpose of calculating density under this section, open space shall consist of that portion of land in the proposal that is suitable for development. As used in this section "suitable for development" shall be construed to include all land except land described in subdivision (5) of this subsection. The density provided for in this subdivision shall be increased by two per cent if the open space to be set aside is adjacent to other open space or to a public highway;
 - (3) Notwithstanding any minimum lot or building requirements in the municipality, the size of lots shall be based on soil characteristics, except as otherwise provided for in this subdivision. If a lot is served by a public water or sewer system or other sewage treatment system,

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the regulations may authorize the planning commission to waive the requirements of the subdivision regulations, including, but not limited to, requirements for lot size setbacks, lot coverage, building height and road frontage. If a lot is not served by a public water or sewer system or other sewage treatment system, such regulations shall contain provisions for lot size, setbacks, lot coverage, building height and road frontage that are necessary to protect the health and safety of the municipality;

- (4) Open space in a conservation development subdivision shall restore, preserve or enhance wildlife habitation or use of the property. A condition of approval shall include a written commitment by a municipality or a nonprofit conservation organization for the management of the open space. Such commitment shall be recorded on the land records of each municipality in which the property is located; and
- (5) The amount of open space the planning commission may require in a conservation development subdivision shall be at least twenty-five per cent, but not more than fifty per cent, of the land that can be improved excluding: (A) Land already committed to a public use or purpose, whether publicly or privately owned; (B) existing parks, recreation areas and open space that is dedicated to the public or subject to a recorded conservation easement; (C) land otherwise subject to an enforceable restriction on or prohibition of development; (D) wetlands or watercourses, as defined in chapter 440 of the general statutes; and (E) land with steep slopes in excess of forty degrees.
- Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2008*) (a) A planning commission, at the time of and as part of its adoption of conservation development subdivision regulations, may adopt design standards for a conservation development subdivision.
- (b) Such design standards may (1) ensure that construction within the conservation development subdivision is complementary to adjacent and neighboring buildings and structures; and (2) address the

scale and proportions of buildings, site coverage, alignment, width and grade of streets and sidewalks, type and location of infrastructure, location of building and garage entrances, off-street parking, protection of significant natural site features, location and design of open spaces, signage, and setbacks and buffering from adjacent properties.

- Sec. 7. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2008*) (a) A planning commission shall prescribe, consistent with the provisions of this section and sections 5 and 6 of this act, the form of an application for approval of a conservation development subdivision. Receipt and processing of applications shall follow the time periods and procedures of chapter 126 of the general statutes. A planning commission, or its agent, may, to the extent allowed by the Freedom of Information Act, conduct one or more preliminary or preapplication planning or workshop meetings with regard to a conservation development subdivision.
- (b) The conservation development subdivision regulations may require the applicant for approval of a conservation development subdivision to pay the cost of reasonable consulting fees to provide peer review of the technical aspects of the application for the benefit of the commission. Such fees shall be held in a separate account and used only for expenses associated with the technical review of the application by consultants who are not otherwise salaried employees of the municipality or the commission, and any surplus remaining, including any interest accrued, shall be returned to the applicant within forty-five days of the completion of such technical review.
 - (c) Conservation development subdivision regulations may provide for the referral of a subdivision application for comment to other agencies, boards or commissions of the municipality. If a subdivision application is referred to another agency, board or commission, such agency, board or commission may provide any comments to the planning commission within the applicable time period for such commission to make a decision on the application.

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(d) A conservation development subdivision shall be approved by the planning commission subject only to conditions that are necessary to (1) ensure substantial compliance of the proposed subdivision with the requirements of the conservation development subdivision regulations and design standards, if any, pursuant to sections 5 and 6 of this act and chapter 126 of the general statutes; or (2) ensure compliance with the provisions of any state law or regulations adopted thereunder or local ordinance concerning land use. An application may be denied only on the grounds that: (A) The development does not meet the requirements set forth in the conservation development subdivision regulations or the design stands for the conservation development subdivision; (B) the applicant failed to submit information and fees required by the regulations and necessary for an adequate and timely review of the development; or (C) there is no grantee for an easement or conveyance of the open space.

- (e) The duration and renewal of an approval of a conservation development subdivision shall be governed by section 8-26c or 8-26g of the general statutes, as applicable.
- Sec. 8. Section 8-25 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July* 256 1, 2008):
 - (a) No subdivision of land shall be made until a plan for such subdivision has been approved by the commission. Any person, firm or corporation making any subdivision of land without the approval of the commission shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars for each lot sold or offered for sale or so subdivided. Any plan for subdivision shall, upon approval, or when taken as approved by reason of the failure of the commission to act, be filed or recorded by the applicant in the office of the town clerk not later than ninety days after the expiration of the appeal period under section 8-8 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes, or in the case of an appeal, not later than ninety days after the termination of such appeal by dismissal, withdrawal or judgment in favor of the applicant but, if it is a plan for

subdivision wholly or partially within a district, it shall be filed in the offices of both the district clerk and the town clerk, and any plan not so filed or recorded within the prescribed time shall become null and void, except that the commission may extend the time for such filing for two additional periods of ninety days and the plan shall remain valid until the expiration of such extended time. All such plans shall be delivered to the applicant for filing or recording not more than thirty days after the time for taking an appeal from the action of the commission has elapsed or not more than thirty days after the date that plans modified in accordance with the commission's approval and that comply with section 7-31 are delivered to the commission, whichever is later, and in the event of an appeal, not more than thirty days after the termination of such appeal by dismissal, withdrawal or judgment in favor of the applicant or not more than thirty days after the date that plans modified in accordance with the commission's approval and that comply with section 7-31 are delivered to the commission, whichever is later. No such plan shall be recorded or filed by the town clerk or district clerk or other officer authorized to record or file plans until its approval has been endorsed thereon by the chairman or secretary of the commission, and the filing or recording of a subdivision plan without such approval shall be void. Before exercising the powers granted in this section, the commission shall adopt regulations covering the subdivision of land. No such regulations shall become effective until after a public hearing held in accordance with the provisions of section 8-7d of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes. Such regulations shall provide that the land to be subdivided shall be of such character that it can be used for building purposes without danger to health or the public safety, that proper provision shall be made for water, sewerage and drainage, including the upgrading of any downstream ditch, culvert or other drainage structure which, through the introduction of additional drainage due to such subdivision, becomes undersized and creates the potential for flooding on a state highway, and, in areas contiguous to brooks, rivers or other bodies of water subject to flooding, including tidal flooding, that proper provision shall be made for protective flood

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control measures and that the proposed streets are in harmony with existing or proposed principal thoroughfares shown in the plan of conservation and development as described in section 8-23 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes, especially in regard to safe intersections with such thoroughfares, and so arranged and of such width, as to provide an adequate and convenient system for present and prospective traffic needs. Such regulations shall also provide that the commission may require the provision of open spaces, parks and playgrounds when, and in places, deemed proper by the planning commission, which open spaces, parks and playgrounds shall be shown on the subdivision plan. Such regulations may, with the approval of the commission, authorize the applicant to pay a fee to the municipality or pay a fee to the municipality and transfer land to the municipality in lieu of any requirement to provide open spaces. Such payment or combination of payment and the fair market value of land transferred shall be equal to not more than ten per cent of the fair market value of the land to be subdivided prior to the approval of the subdivision. The fair market value shall be determined by an appraiser jointly selected by the commission and the applicant. A fraction of such payment the numerator of which is one and the denominator of which is the number of approved parcels in the subdivision shall be made at the time of the sale of each approved parcel of land in the subdivision and placed in a fund in accordance with the provisions of section 8-25b. The open space requirements of this section shall not apply if the transfer of all land in a subdivision of less than five parcels is to a parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle or first cousin for no consideration, or if the subdivision is to contain affordable housing, as defined in section 8-39a, equal to twenty per cent or more of the total housing to be constructed in such subdivision. Such regulations shall not impose conditions or requirements on conservation developments, as defined in section 1 of this act, that are different from other subdivisions permitted under this chapter, except as provided by section 5 to 7, inclusive, of this act. Such regulations, on and after July 1, 1985, shall provide that proper provision be made for soil erosion and sediment control pursuant to

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section 22a-329. Such regulations shall not impose conditions and requirements on manufactured homes having as their narrowest dimension twenty-two feet or more and built in accordance with federal manufactured home construction and safety standards or on lots containing such manufactured homes which are substantially different from conditions and requirements imposed on single-family dwellings and lots containing single-family dwellings. regulations shall not impose conditions and requirements on developments to be occupied by manufactured homes having as their narrowest dimension twenty-two feet or more and built in accordance with federal manufactured home construction and safety standards which are substantially different from conditions and requirements imposed on multifamily dwellings, lots containing multifamily dwellings, cluster developments or planned unit developments. The commission may also prescribe the extent to which and the manner in which streets shall be graded and improved and public utilities and services provided and, in lieu of the completion of such work and installations previous to the final approval of a plan, the commission may accept a bond in an amount and with surety and conditions satisfactory to it securing to the municipality the actual construction, maintenance and installation of such improvements and utilities within a period specified in the bond. Such regulations may provide, in lieu of the completion of the work and installations above referred to, previous to the final approval of a plan, for an assessment or other method whereby the municipality is put in an assured position to do such work and make such installations at the expense of the owners of the property within the subdivision. Such regulations may provide that in lieu of either the completion of the work or the furnishing of a bond as provided in this section, the commission may authorize the filing of a plan with a conditional approval endorsed thereon. Such approval shall be conditioned on (1) the actual construction, maintenance and installation of any improvements or utilities prescribed by the commission, or (2) the provision of a bond as provided in this section. Upon the occurrence of either of such events, the commission shall cause a final approval to be endorsed thereon in

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the manner provided by this section. Any such conditional approval shall lapse five years from the date it is granted, provided the applicant may apply for and the commission may, in its discretion, grant a renewal of such conditional approval for an additional period of five years at the end of any five-year period, except that the commission may, by regulation, provide for a shorter period of conditional approval or renewal of such approval. Any person who enters into a contract for the purchase of any lot subdivided pursuant to a conditional approval may rescind such contract by delivering a written notice of rescission to the seller not later than three days after receipt of written notice of final approval if such final approval has additional amendments or any conditions that were not included in the conditional approval and are unacceptable to the buyer. Any person, firm or corporation who, prior to such final approval, transfers title to any lot subdivided pursuant to a conditional approval shall be fined not more than one thousand dollars for each lot transferred. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize the marketing of any lot prior to the granting of conditional approval or renewal of such conditional approval.

(b) The regulations adopted under subsection (a) of this section shall also encourage energy-efficient patterns of development and land use, the use of solar and other renewable forms of energy, and energy conservation. The regulations shall require any person submitting a plan for a subdivision to the commission under subsection (a) of this section to demonstrate to the commission that such person has considered, in developing the plan, using passive solar energy techniques which would not significantly increase the cost of the housing to the buyer, after tax credits, subsidies and exemptions. As used in this subsection and section 8-2, passive solar energy techniques mean site design techniques which maximize solar heat gain, minimize heat loss and provide thermal storage within a building during the heating season and minimize heat gain and provide for natural ventilation during the cooling season. The site design techniques shall include, but not be limited to: (1) House orientation; (2) street and lot

layout; (3) vegetation; (4) natural and man-made topographical features; and (5) protection of solar access within the development.

- (c) The regulations adopted under subsection (a) of this section, may, to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain, infrastructure capacity and the plan of development for the community, provide for cluster development, and may provide for incentives for cluster development such as density bonuses, or may require cluster development.
- Sec. 9. Section 16a-32 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2008*):
 - (a) Each revision of the plan of conservation and development shall be initiated by the secretary and shall be undertaken in accordance with the process outlined in this chapter.
 - (b) Without initiating a revision of the plan and after receiving written approval from the committee, the secretary may undertake interim changes in the plan upon the secretary's own initiative or upon application by (1) the chief executive officer of a municipality, with the approval of the legislative body of such municipality, or (2) any owner of real property or any interest therein on which a change is proposed. No application for an interim change from a municipality under subdivision (1) of this subsection may be submitted unless (A) the municipality in which the change is proposed has a plan of conservation and development that has been updated in accordance with section 8-23 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes, and (B) the application includes evidence, in writing, of the opinion of the planning commission of the municipality regarding the interim change. The secretary shall adopt regulations in accordance with chapter 54 to establish procedures for applications for such interim changes by any person, political subdivision of the state or state agency. Such regulations shall include, but need not be limited to, provisions for interviews and consultations with local planning and zoning commissions or, in those municipalities which have adopted

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the provisions of chapter 124 but which do not have a zoning commission, the persons designated to exercise zoning powers pursuant to section 8-1, review of local plans of development and public hearings. The secretary shall notify the chief executive officer and the persons exercising planning or zoning powers in any municipality which is the subject of an application for change in the locational guide map and shall notify any members of the General Assembly representing any area which is the subject of such an application. A joint public hearing by the secretary and the committee shall be held in any such municipality if requested by any chief executive officer or planning or zoning official notified by the secretary pursuant to this subsection. The committee shall also hold a hearing in addition to any hearing required to be held in any municipality concerning the locational guide map on any other proposed changes. After such public hearing, the committee shall approve or disapprove the application and notify the secretary of its decision not more than ten days thereafter. In the case of an application to change the development priority classification of an area on the locational guide map from rural lands to rural community centers and, if the area described in the application is a conservation development, as defined in section 1 of this act, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that such change is in the best interest of the state. The secretary shall make interim changes in the plan to reflect the approved changes.

- (c) The secretary shall report annually on or before February fifteenth to the committee progress on the implementation of the plan and the extent to which state actions are in conformity with the plan.
- (d) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the committee from initiating a revision of the plan at any time."

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2008	New section
Sec. 2	July 1, 2008	New section
Sec. 3	July 1, 2008	New section

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Sec. 4	July 1, 2008	New section
Sec. 5	July 1, 2008	New section
Sec. 6	July 1, 2008	New section
Sec. 7	July 1, 2008	New section
Sec. 8	July 1, 2008	8-25
Sec. 9	July 1, 2008	16a-32